

COVID-19 media surveillance

18 May 2020; 9:30

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) is dominating the news, with over 80 thousand articles per day on Sunday (in 70 languages, as detected by [MEDISYS](#)).

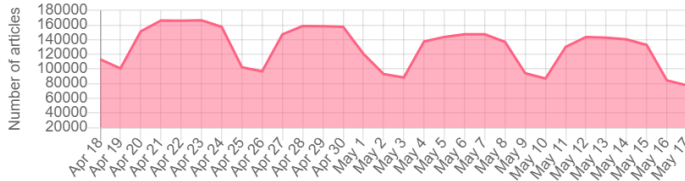


Figure 1 Media reports on coronavirus (source: EMM/MEDISYS)

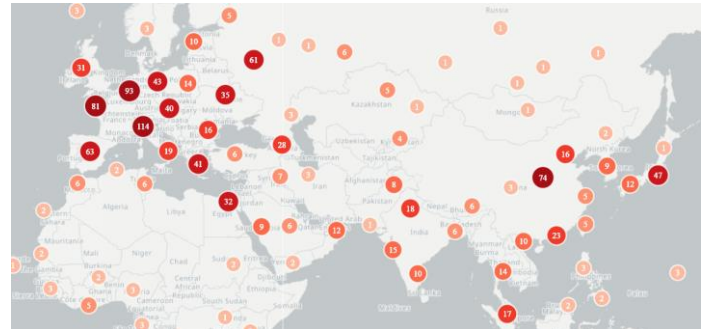


Figure 2 Geolocations mentioned in coronavirus media reports showing large clusters of media reports on Italy, France, Spain, Germany, the UK, Russia, Egypt, India, China, South Korea and Japan (source: EMM/MEDISYS)



Headlines

- USA: Secretary of Health and Human Services [Alex Azar blamed the high number of cases and deaths on communities with 'greater risk profiles'; more than 18,000 new cases in the US](#) on Sunday
- UK [researchers hope dogs can be trained to detect coronavirus](#); UK's [daily death toll dropped to 170, the lowest since start of lockdown](#)
- Spain's Health Ministry will make [masks mandatory beyond just public transport](#); daily number of [deaths falls below 100 for the first time in two months](#); [Madrid, Barcelona and much of Castilla y León remain in Phase 0, but some islands will be entering Phase 2](#)
- Italy: [shops open today under social distancing with use of face masks, gyms and swimming pools will open on 25 May, free travel from 3 June and theaters and cinema from 15 June](#)
- France: [25 clusters identified since 'déconfinement'](#)
- Belgium: [only 60 new hospital admissions since Saturday in Belgium](#)
- Luxembourg: [second group of pupils returns to school](#) during 'reentrée' as [seven new cases were reported](#)
- Russia records [more than 280,000 cases, the world's second-highest number of cases, yet allows foreign athletes to compete in its domestic sports leagues](#)
- India recorded [5,242 new cases, the country's largest single-day rise as the lockdown is extended until the end of the month](#)
- Brazil [overtakes Spain and Italy as new cases reach 241,000](#); hospitals in [São Paulo 'near collapse'](#)
- Singapore: [682 new cases with one new cluster, mostly linked to dormitories for foreign workers](#)
- South Korea's daily count of [new cases stayed below 20 for the third day in a row as the outbreak from Seoul's party district of Itaewon seems to have been contained](#)
- Japan: [number of new cases drops to 5 in Tokyo and zero in Osaka](#); Japan's [economy fell into recession shrinking 0.9% in the first quarter](#)
- China reports [25 new coronavirus cases with Wuhan showing highest number of asymptomatic infections](#)



Twitter

The following news were found among the most mentioned/retweeted items:

- "We cannot count on having a vaccine ready within a year and a half" ([ethic](#))
- "WHO finds no evidence of contagion from coronavirus by contact with objects" ([abc](#))
- "Merkel highlights the value of the critical press in times of the coronavirus" ([dw](#))
- "Modi's popularity soars as India weathers the pandemic" ([nytimes](#))
- "It eats him alive inside': Trump's latest attack shows endless obsession with Obama" ([theguardian](#))
- "A sitting president, riling the nation during a crisis" ([nytimes](#))
- "Inside Trump's coronavirus meltdown. What went wrong in the president's first real crisis – and what does it mean for the US?" ([ft](#))
- "Drug promoted by Trump as coronavirus 'game changer' increasingly linked to deaths" ([washingtonpost](#))
- "Eric Trump accuses Democrats of 'milking' coronavirus lockdowns to win the election" ([axios](#))
- "FDA halts Bill Gates coronavirus testing program" ([thehill](#))
- "How many people are dying of coronavirus in Mexico? It's hard to say" ([latimes](#))

The hashtag #conte trended in Italy after Prime Minister Conte's press conference explaining the roadmap to ease restrictions in Italy.

In Germany, the hashtags #verschwoerungstheorien ("conspiracy theories" in the context of demonstrations in several German cities) and #bundesliga (following the first Bundesliga matches after the crisis) trended this weekend.

The most mentioned English sources were the New York Times, the Guardian, Fox News, the Washington Post and CNN.

Ethic.es, Infobae, El Pais, Youtube and El Diario, and Le Monde and Le Parisien were among the most mentioned Spanish and French sources, respectively.

” *Extracted Quotes*

Giuseppe Conte (Italy, Prime Minister):

"We're facing a calculated risk in the knowledge that the contagion curve may rise again"; "We have to accept it otherwise we will never be able to start up again".

Fernando Simón (Spain, Director of the Health Ministry's Coordination Center for Health Alerts):

"We always have doubts as to whether what we are seeing is what is really happening"; "It's possible that there are chains of infections that haven't been identified. As we gradually permit greater mobility, we could be exposed to imported cases, and all of this must be controlled with great care".

Fact Check

Fact checked: claims downplaying COVID-19

- Fact checkers debunk a self-proclaimed Dallas nurse's claim that patients who die of other causes are included in the city's COVID-19 death tolls ([afpfactcheck](#)).

Fact checked: anti-Muslim claims

- Indian fact checkers debunk a video claiming to show a Muslim spitting at a subway rider in an attempt to spread the novel coronavirus, reporting that the video is actually from August 2019 and has, therefore, no link to COVID-19 ([thequint](#)).

Fact checked: anti-vax claims

- Fact checkers debunk claims that the flu vaccine increases the risk of coronavirus infection, reporting that according to the CDC, a "preponderance" of scientific and medical evidence exists to suggest that the flu vaccine does not affect people's susceptibility to non-flu respiratory viruses ([snopes](#)).

Fact checked: conspiracy theories

- Fact checkers debunk claims that a new US federal legislation to support COVID-19 testing and contact tracing "is about controlling/tracking population, not about coronavirus" ([politifact](#)).
- Fact checkers debunk claims that the Gates Foundation stands to make nearly £31.5 billion on a coronavirus vaccine in the UK, reporting that the Gates Foundation has pledged millions of dollars to companies developing potential coronavirus vaccines and that there is no evidence that the charity stands to profit from them ([politifact](#)).